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World War II veterans from Waukegan were among those filing vivid remembrances of their combat experience with the Library of Congress during a trip organized by U.S. Rep Mark Kirk, R-Highland Park.

Kirk invited all World War II veterans of the 10th Congressional District to a ceremony, a private tour and reception Saturday at the new World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C.

The ceremony capped an event to commemorate the recording of key remembrances by 10th District veterans filed with the Library of Congress.

"I want to make sure the World War II stories of our Greatest Generation are kept forever at the Library," Kirk said. The Library of Congress is collecting as many personal recollections of World War II veterans as possible.

More than 75 10th District veterans, nearly all who served in World War II, heard from the lead sculptor of the memorial, Raymond Kaskey, and the National Park Service officers about how the memorial was designed and the special details that mark the service of the 16 million Americans who served in the conflict.

Eleven veterans from the 10th District submitted their stories to the Library of Congress.

Among them was George Harlow of Waukegan, who served with the Army Air Corps' 445th Bomb Group.

"In training in England, they told us that if we ever had to parachute from a plane, to pretend that we were dead so that the fighter plane would not shoot at us," Harlow said in his submission.

"We took a cannon round into the front of the plane, and it was on fire. I went through the tail and hung very limp as if I was dead. I heard a Messerschmitt approaching, and out of the corner of my eye I could see the face of the pilot. We hid that night in the snow, but the SS followed our footsteps. If the locals would have found us, they would have killed us because they were mad about getting their town bombed. At least the soldiers wanted us alive for information."

Lt. Col. Shadie Simon of Waukegan submitted memories of his time in New Guinea.

"In New Guinea we went out on patrols early in the morning and returned at nightfall, and we would engage the Japanese who were scattered about the island," Simon wrote. "They were fierce fighters who would rather die than go home. Some days my soldiers would be dropping around me. I don't know how I got out of there alive."

The 7-acre, \$70 million World War II Memorial is located between the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument. It opened Memorial Day weekend.